

DETAIL ASSIGNMENTS**OVERVIEW**

1. The purpose of this policy is to set out the conditions and procedures for arranging for a staff member to undertake a detail assignment, and to outline the roles and responsibilities for arranging and approving such missions.

PURPOSE

2. Detail assignments are special medium-term missions designed to provide support to offices arising from gaps in capacity due to unfilled vacancies, maternity leave, special leave without pay, and extended sick leave. Detail assignments provide an opportunity for on-the-job learning in a different function or context, facilitate the sharing of experiences, and foster team-building within the organization. Detail assignments involve a temporary assignment to perform the functions of a post in a different duty station, or a different division or office in the same duty station. Before commencing with the detail assignment process, offices should assess whether coverage is possible within the office. Temporary assignments of staff which take place within the same country office, regional office, or same office or division at headquarters do not need to be managed as a detail assignment.
3. As a detail assignment is intended to replace existing capacity in an office on a medium-term basis, rather than provide additional capacity, a detail assignment is not the appropriate mechanism to use for short-term missions or emergency or humanitarian situations which should be managed as regular missions.
4. Due to financial implications, detail assignments should support organizational imperatives. They should provide value-added for the Organization in terms of cross fertilization between different units and substantive improvement of work. The detail assignment must also demonstratively support the selected staff member's learning and career development planning and objectives.

EFFECTIVE DATE

5. This policy supersedes all previous issuances on detail assignments, and enters into effect from the date of its publication.

ELIGIBILITY

6. Staff in the International Professional, National Officer, and General Service categories serving on permanent, continuing, and fixed-term appointments as well as Junior Professional Officers may avail of the opportunity of a detail assignment. Detail assignments are not available to staff serving on temporary appointments, or complementary personnel with non-staff status (including persons engaged as interns, United Nations volunteers, service contract holders, individual consultants, and procurement contract holders).
7. Every application for a detail assignment will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and selection of a candidate will be determined primarily based on organizational needs and staff members' specific developmental requirements. Every effort should be made to make the benefits of the developmental opportunities offered by a detail assignment available to staff on as wide a basis as possible. Therefore, the request for approval of a candidate for a detail assignment must include information on any previous detail assignments already undertaken by the candidate during their period of service with UNFPA.

PROCEDURES**Request and approval process**

8. Before identifying a candidate, the head of the potential Receiving Office (the office that will receive the person on detail assignment) interested in hosting a detail assignment should first seek approval for the assignment by completing [Part I of the Request for Detail Assignment form](#).
9. The information to be provided in the request includes:
 - (a) purpose of/justification for the detail assignment, and if covering a vacant post the action taken towards filling the post and expected date of finalization of the recruitment process;
 - (b) supervisory arrangements;
 - (c) main tasks and responsibilities;
 - (d) key expected results;
 - (e) proposed dates;
 - (f) estimated costs and source of funding for the assignment; and
 - (g) if covering a vacant post, confirmation that the cost of the detail assignment will not exceed the standard cost of the vacant post, pro-rated for the duration of the assignment (a post's cost by location, grade and cost classification can be determined in the RPBB section of the DMS microsite using the [Standard Post Cost tool](#)).

10. The request should be submitted to the applicable headquarters or regional director responsible for the Receiving Office to check whether the cost of the detail assignment:
 - (a) can be met from the standard post costs for the vacant post it is being funded from, pro-rated for the duration of the assignment. If so, the director will confirm that the request meets the related human resources requirements, arrange for the applicable vacant post to be frozen, provide approval for the detail assignment in Part I of the form, and send it to the Receiving Office.
 - (b) will exceed the standard cost for the vacant post. If so, before providing approval, the Director will first send the request form for clearance to the Division for Management Services (DMS).
11. For initial requests, when possible offices should ideally try to obtain approval at least one to two months before the proposed start date of the assignment to allow sufficient time for processing.
12. Extensions of existing detail assignments should be obtained through the same request and approval process as the initial request. In such a case, only Part I of the form needs to be completed. The request should contain the justification for the extension, including the status of the recruitment process if covering a vacant post. For extensions, approval must be obtained at least two weeks before the end date of the ongoing assignment. Prior to making a request for extension, the Receiving Office must ensure that it has the agreement of the Releasing Office (the office that has released the person to go on detail assignment) for the continued release of the staff member.
13. DMS will monitor whether UNFPA's Institutional Budget expenditures on detail assignments remain within the funds available from vacant positions, and will take action as appropriate if this is exceeded.

Selection of candidate for detail assignment

14. Detail assignments will normally be filled through a competitive process. After approval has been received for the detail assignment in Part I of the form, DHR will arrange internal dissemination of a [detail assignment announcement](#) advertising the opportunity.
15. Candidates will be requested to send their [detail assignment application](#) directly to the Receiving Office. An applicant will be expected to have already obtained the approval of his/her supervisor and head of office to undertake the assignment if selected prior to submitting his/her application. The Receiving Office will review the applications against the requirements of the assignment and identify a suitable candidate.
16. The Director of DHR can approve exceptions in appropriate cases and allow identification of a candidate without advertising the assignment.

17. After identifying the candidate, the Receiving Office will contact the Releasing Office to finalize agreement on the arrangements for the detail assignment and to request the Releasing Office to initiate completion of [Part II of the Request for Detail Assignment form](#). However, if the proposed source of funding changes or the actual costs will exceed five percent of the original estimated costs, Part I of the form must be resubmitted before proceeding with the assignment.
18. Part II (together with Part I) of the form should be sent to the relevant headquarters or regional director responsible for the Releasing Office for approval. The information to be provided in the request includes details about the candidate and a description of how the detail assignment will support the candidate's learning and career development.
19. After approval is received, the Receiving Office will finalize the travel arrangements, and if applicable DHR will deal with issues related to coverage under the medical insurance policy for detail assignments based in New York.

Reporting and evaluation

20. At the conclusion of the detail assignment, the staff member must prepare a mission report with a copy to all the offices concerned. Ideally, to enhance knowledge sharing across the organization, this should be complemented by the staff member offering a brown bag lunch or learning session. The staff member's supervisor in the Receiving Office should provide input to the staff member's Performance Appraisal and Development (PAD) report in accordance with the instructions provided in the PAD Guide.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

21. The total duration of a detail assignment should normally be between four weeks to four months. In exceptional circumstances, the assignment may be further extended in the interests of the Organization to reach a total duration not exceeding six months.
22. A detail assignment should normally only be used for assignments in International Professional or National Officer posts. More appropriate options should be used for coverage of General Service posts, such as contracting a replacement on a temporary appointment or individual consultant contract, or redistributing the duties within the office. It is also not appropriate to use detail assignments to temporarily replace staff who are on mission. While detail assignments should not be used to cover General Service positions, General Service staff are encouraged to apply for detail assignment opportunities to International Professional and National Officer posts.

23. The total cost of a detail assignment should not exceed the equivalent cost of a position it seeks to cover for the same time period (funds from a vacant position in previous periods cannot be used for future commitments). If the detail assignment is to temporarily cover a vacant position that position must remain vacant for the duration of the detail assignment.
24. Under no circumstances will a detail assignment be approved to supplement staffing requirements (for instance, as a consequence of organizational realignment) or to fill a vacant post that has been frozen as part of an austerity plan.
25. The travel and related costs for the detail assignment (such as flights and daily subsistence allowance, as well as danger pay if applicable) should normally be met by the Receiving Office. The salary and related costs (such as pension, medical insurance) for the staff member on a detail assignment will normally continue to be covered by the Releasing Office.
26. Except where the detail assignment is in the same duty station, during the period of the detail assignment, the staff member will be considered to be on duty travel and his/her travel related entitlements will accordingly be covered by the terms of [UNFPA's Travel Policy](#). However, given that the detail assignment supports staff members' developmental goals and that the assignment is for a longer period the standard of accommodation for the flight will be economy, regardless of the duration of the flight. Staff members with a flight of a duration that would otherwise qualify them for travel on business class should be provided with a rest day prior to commencing the assignment. DSA will be paid by the receiving office at the prevailing rate at the time of the detail assignment.
27. Except in cases in which the detail assignment is in the same duty station, a staff member will not normally be granted annual leave during the period of the assignment. In the event that annual leave needs to be exceptionally approved, the individual on detail assignment will not receive DSA during the period spent on annual leave. A staff member is entitled to sick leave under the same terms and conditions as for other duty travel.
28. A staff member will not receive compensatory days off in respect of the travel on detail assignment and will be entitled to official holidays at the location of the Receiving Office rather than the location of the Releasing Office during the duration of the assignment.
29. Except in cases in which the detail assignment is in the same duty station, a staff member is not eligible to receive a Special Post Allowance.

SUMMARY OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibility
Receiving office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submits Part I of the Request for Detail Assignment form to the relevant headquarters or regional director; • If funded from a vacant post, indicates whether the detail assignment costs exceed the standard post cost pro-rated for the duration of the assignment; • Selects a suitable candidate, normally as a result of a competitive process; • Contacts releasing office to finalize agreement and requests releasing office to initiate Part II of Request for Detail Assignment form; • Finalizes travel arrangements for the selected candidate; • Arranges DSA payment at prevailing rate of DSA; • Supervisor in requesting office provides input to staff member's PAD.
Releasing office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides agreement for candidate to go on detail assignment and completes Part II of the Request for Detail Assignment form; • Supervisor in releasing office ensures input is received on staff member's performance during the detail assignment, and that the staff member submits a mission report.
Applicable HQ or Regional Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checks whether releasing office has confirmed that cost of detail assignment can be met from standard post costs and prorated for duration of detail assignment when funded from vacant post. Where costs will exceed, forwards the request to DMS for clearance; • Decides to approve or not to approve the request for detail assignment and sends the receiving office Part I of the Request for Detail Assignment form confirming the decision; • Provides approval for identified candidate on Part II of the Request for Detail Assignment form.
DHR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arranges advertisement of the detail assignment opportunity on the basis of information provided by the receiving office;
DMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews and clears requests funded from vacant positions where costs of detail assignment exceed the vacant post standard cost; • Monitors whether UNFPA's total detail assignment expenditure remains within funds available from vacant positions.
Detail assignment candidate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies to detail assignment vacancy after obtaining approval of supervisor and head of office to undertake the assignment if selected; • After concluding detail assignment, prepares a mission report, and ideally hosts a brown bag session or learning afternoon.

